

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 3076

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: PS ENDORSES EANES

REF: LISBON 3058 (DTG 081200Z MAY 76)

SUMMARY: THE SOCIALIST NATIONAL COMMISSION ON MAY 8 VOTED TO SUPPORT EANES'S CANDIDACY. BUT A SOARES CANDIDACY REMAINS POSSIBILITY SHOULD EANES DECIDE NOT TO RUN, AND AZEVEDO IS STILL IN CONTENTION. THE COMMUNISTS HAVE ADOPTED A FLEXIBLE STRATEGY DESIGNED TO ENHANCE POSSIBILITIES FOR PCP PARTICPATION IN THE NEXT GOVERNMENT.

1. PS SUPPORTS EANES: THE SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMISSION VOTED ON MAY 8 TO ENDORSE THE CANDIDACY OF ARMY CHIEF EANES. AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ENDORSEMENT MAY BE FORTH-
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COMING IN A SOARES PRESS CONFERENCE TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED

FOR MAY 10. ACCORDING TO PS SOURCES, THE 150-MAN NATIONAL COMMISSION, THE HIGHEST PARTY ORGAN, VOTED TO ENDORSE EANES "PROVIDED HE IS THE MILITARY CANDIDATE."

2. PCP ON PRESIDENCY: THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST PARTY RELEASED A STATEMENT FOLLOWING ITS MAY 9 MEETING CLARIFYING THE PCP POSITION ON THE FORTHCOMING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDED:

-- FLEXIBLE STRATEGY: PCP APPROACH TO ELECTIONS WILL DEPEND UPON NATURE OF RACE. IF "REACTIONARY RIGHT" PRESENTS CANDIDATE, PCP GOAL WILL BE TO DEFEAT HIM AND ELECT CANDIDATE OF LEFT. IF MILITARY FIGURES COMPETE IN THE ELECTIONS, PARTISAN OVERTONES SHOULD NOT BE INJECTED INTO CAMPAIGN. IN EITHER CASE, CAMPAIGN WILL PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY TO ENCOURAGE RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN PCP, SOCIALISTS, AND MILITARY "OF APRIL 25, ESPECIALLY THOSE IN HIGH POSITIONS."

-- MILITARY CANDIDACY: PCP HAD ALWAYS CONSIDERED IT DESIRABLE THAT NEXT PRESIDENT BE MILITARY FIGURE ENJOYING SUPPORT OF REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL. RC ENDORSEMENT ALONE, HOWEVER, WILL NOT GUARANTEE PCP SUPPORT FOR A CANDIDATE. COMMUNISTS WOULD NEED PRIOR FORMAL GUARANTEES THAT CANDIDATE HAD NO "ANTI-COMMUNIST FEELINGS." PCP WOULD SOON INITIATE CONTACTS WITH POTENTIAL MILITARY CANDIDATES IN THIS REGARD. A MILITARY CANDIDATE PROPOSED BY THE ULTRA LEFT (READ OTELO) WOULD WORK AGAINST THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING CLASS AND WOULD BE OPPOSED BY THE PCP.

-- CIVILIAN CANDIDACY: SHOULD MILITARY BE UNABLE TO REACH CONSENSUS ON CANDIDATE, PCP WOULD NOT BE AVERSE TO A CIVILIAN CANDIDACY, SO LONG AS CIVILIAN CONTENDER ENJOYED THE SUPPORT OF "PRINCIPAL DEMOCRATIC FORCES OF ... THE PS AND PCP." THE PCP RESERVED THE RIGHT TO PRESENT ITS OWN CANDIDATE.

3. EXPRESSO POLL: AN "EXPRESSO" POLL ON PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCES, PUBLISHED IN INSTALLMENTS APRIL 30 AND MAY 8, SHOULD HELP TO KEEP PRIME MINISTER AZEVEDO'S PRESIDENTIAL ASPIRATIONS ALIVE. ALTHOUGH 52 PERCENT OF THOSE SURVEYED

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EXPRESSED NO PREFERENCE, AZEVEDO WAS, NEVERTHELESS, THE FRONT RUNNER WITH 8 PERCENT, WITH EANES FOR BACK AT 4 PERCENT. AZEVEDO ALSO DID WELL ON NAME RECOGNITION. HIS 82 PERCENT TOTAL TRAILED ONLY SOARES (85 PERCENT), COSTA GOMES (84 PERCENT), AND CUNHAL (84 PERCENT). AGAIN EANES WAS FAR BACK AT 48 PERCENT.

4. GIS COLLOQUIUM: THE COLLOQUIUM ON

PROSPECTS FOR MEDITERRANEAN SOCIALISM STAGED MAY 7-9 BY THE MARXIST SOCIALIST INTERVENTION GROUP (GIS) TURNED OUT TO BE LARGELY A DOMESTIC MEDIA EVENT. IT FAILED TO DRAW SIGNIFICANT INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATION DESPITE HEAVY ADVANCE PUBLICITY AND INVITATIONS TO ALL SOCIALIST AND COMMUNIST PARTIES IN SOUTHERN EUROPE AND THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN. AMONG THOSE ATTENDING WERE A NUMBER OF "POLITICAL" MEMBERS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL, INCLUDING VITOR ALVES, MARTINS GUERREIRO, PEZARRAT CORREIA, AND VITOR CRESPO. LOPES CARDOSO WAS THE ONLY MAJOR FIGURE FROM THE PS ATTENDING. THE SOCIALISTS HAD QUIETLY PASSED THE WORD THAT THEY DID NOT SEE ANY ADVANTAGE IN THE MEETING AT THIS TIME. THE EVENT IS SEEN HERE AS AN ATTEMPT BY ITS SPONSORS TO PROMOTE GIS AS A GROUP WHICH SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION IN THE FORMATION OF THE NEXT GOVERNMENT.

5. COMMENT: DESPITE THE ENDORSEMENT OF EANES, PS INSIDERS TELL US THEY HAVE NOT GIVEN UP ON SOARES'S CANDIDACY. THEY CONSIDER IT STILL A POSSIBILITY THAT EANES WILL EITHER DECIDE NOT TO RUN OR WITHDRAW SHOULD HIS CANDIDACY PRODUCE MORE THAN TOKEN OPPOSITION WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES. WITH EANES OUT OF THE RACE AND NO MILITARY CONSENSUS CCANDIDATE AVAILABLE, SOARES WOULD RUN.

6. THE COMMUNISTS HAVE ADOPTED A FLEXIBLE STRATEGY DESIGNED TO ENHANCE POSSIBILITIES FOR PCP PARTICIPATION IN THE NEXT GOVERNMENT. THEY SEEM PREPARED TO MAKE ANY CONCESSIONS -- PERHAPS EVEN INCLUDING SUPPORT FOR A SOARES CANDIDACY. BUT THE SOCIALISTS CONTINUE TO SEE LITTLE ADVANTAGE IN MAKING A DEAL WITH THE COMMUNISTS. AN OPEN PCP ENDORSEMENT OF SOARES WOULD HURT MORE THAN HELP HIS CANDIDACY.
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